

Goldman Sachs Sued By Former Executive Alleging Anti-Gay Discrimination

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by Jake Offenhartz in News on Jun 5, 2019 1:35 pm

A former vice president of Goldman Sachs is suing the investment banking giant for alleged anti-gay discrimination, claiming the company fired him after he complained about the homophobic treatment.

In a suit filed Wednesday in Manhattan Supreme Court, William Littleton, 31, says he was routinely subjected to demeaning comments from the company's leadership because of his sexual orientation. Among numerous instances of discrimination, the eight-year veteran of the company claims he was excluded from an important conference call because he "sounded too gay," and was once asked, "What's wrong with you? Do you act this way because you're gay?"

Littleton filed a complaint with Goldman's Employee Relations about the discrimination, and was subsequently fired, he says, despite years of "outstanding" performance reviews. That retaliation was allegedly overseen by Rachel Schnoll, managing director and head of the U.S. Product Strategy Group at Goldman, and Sirion Skulpone, head of the Specialty Solutions team within the U.S. Product Strategy Group—both of whom are also named as defendants in the suit.

When Littleton initially informed Skulpone, his direct supervisor, about the discrimination, she allegedly "provided no support other than to say, in sum and substance: 'That sucks.'" Later, she urged him not to file a complaint with human resources because "it would look bad if she did not do something," according to the suit.

As [#PrideMonth](#) kicks off, we celebrate the entire [#LGBT](#) community within our offices and beyond. pic.twitter.com/NidJJcs3Mj

— Goldman Sachs (@GoldmanSachs) [June 1, 2018](#)

The complaint emphasizes that Littleton's experience is not an isolated incident inside the banking firm. A recent investigation, *Gay On Wall Street*, found that despite lip service from big banks about inclusion and diversity, "a veil of vulnerability unifies LGBT experiences in financial services."

In a statement, Littleton's attorney, David E. Gottlieb, said, "Wall Street continues to struggle to create an environment that is inclusive and accepting of LGBTQ+ employees. Mr. Littleton's experiences demonstrate that Goldman Sachs in particular has failed to embrace

this important responsibility. We intend to send a message to all businesses in New York, and Goldman in particular, that this type of treatment towards LGBTQ+ employees will not be tolerated."

The suit alleges that Goldman's treatment of Littleton violates both city and state anti-discrimination protections. He is seeking unspecified compensation and punitive damages.

A spokesperson for the company did return Gothamist's request for comment.

UPDATE: A spokesperson for Goldman has provided the following statement: "Goldman Sachs has a sustained and proven commitment to diversity, and we are proud of the vibrant and diverse LGBTQ community at the firm. We strongly encourage all of our employees to bring their authentic selves to work, because it makes us a better firm. This suit is without merit and we plan to defend ourselves against these baseless claims."